

**OBSTETRICS (C.M.T.).** By J. M. Holmes, M.D., B.S.(Lond.), F.R.C.O.G. Second Edition. (Pp. viii+301; figs. 51. 28s). London: Baillière, Tindall & Cassell, 1969.

THIS small book is said to be "a concise survey of modern obstetrics which meets the entire requirements for the final M.B. examination". It contains 300 pages of solid factual knowledge and the quality of the book and its form are very pleasing. This second edition has been well revised and many recent advances in the field of obstetrics are dealt with, if only briefly – placental localisation and its value in the management of antepartum haemorrhage; fetal blood sampling; antenatal examination of liquor amnii and placental function tests (including heat stable alkaline phosphatase) to mention but a few. A useful chapter on psychiatric conditions pregnancy has been included.

The details of obstetric management however require some adverse criticism. Patients with eclampsia, for example, are to be sedated for 24–48 hours before any attempt is made to deliver the fetus; a more active management, with early resort to caesarean section would often be more logical. All eclamptic patients must be carefully observed after delivery for renal failure and the policy advocated by the author of giving "glucose and water freely" must be condemned as potentially dangerous in oliguric patients.

In patients suffering from haemorrhagic shock due to ruptured ectopic pregnancy it would be unwise to delay laparotomy until adequate blood transfusion has rendered the patient obviously fit for general anaesthesia. Not many obstetricians would agree with the statement that the fetal heart rate is an unreliable index of the state of the fetus in utero – particularly as no mention is made of the importance of bradycardia following uterine contractions; more emphasis should be made of the routine use of syntometrine and controlled cord traction for the management of the third stage of labour. Castor oil and mersalyl injections might well have been omitted from the appendix list of drugs – and perhaps frusemide included. The Singer test is described instead of the more widely used and sensitive Kleihauer test. Despite these comments the book does contain much useful information – and the chapters dealing with normal labour and delivery are very well written.

As far as concise medical text books can go this volume will prove a useful adjunct to the student. W.T.

**MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT, April 1968 – March 1969.** (Pp. vi+317. 28s). London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1969.

MORE than half of this volume is devoted to a handbook providing brief information of the Council's staff, establishments, research supported and aided by grants, fellowships and scholarships and the Advisory Committees. The information is a well indexed, concise guide to the remarkable scope of the Council's activities.

To bring some form to this the first section of the volume is a more formal report concentrating first on two major events of the year under consideration: the death of Sir Henry Dale, the first director of the National Institute of Medical Research, and secondly the retirement of Sir Harold Himsworth, the Secretary since 1949. The Council's functions and policies are then reviewed in general, and specifically in relation to Radiobiology and the Council's overall long-term plans for research in this field.

The second section of the volume is a series of four reviews of notable achievements in selected fields of medical research during the period when Sir Harold Himsworth was Secretary, during which time Nobel Prizes were awarded to six members of the Council's staff. These reviews will have a wide appeal, written by authors deeply involved in the subjects they review. Dr. M. F. Perutz recounts the recent development of molecular biology: a delightful article revealing the author's enthusiasm for his subject. Dr. J. H. Humphrey reviews Immunology; Drs. J. M. Barnes and J. C. Gilson review Occupational Health and Toxicology; and Professor Doll reviews Epidemiology.

There is much useful information in this book, but by very careful selection and presentation the authors have achieved an image of the Council as a synthesis of its diverse parts throughout the United Kingdom and abroad. R.J.A.